SERMONS,

Dedicated to

Her Royal Highneſs Princeſs AMELIA.

By the Rev. THOMAS BUCKRIDGE, M. A. late Fellow of *King*'s College, *Cambridge*; Chaplain to the Right Hon. Lord *Onſlow*; Vicar of *Send*, and Rector of *Merrow* in *Surry*.

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15/4/46

TO

Her Royal Highneſs

Princeſs Amelia.

May it pleaſe your Royal Highneſs.

THOSE diſtinguiſhing amiable qualities of which your Royal Highneſs is poſſeſſed, and which render your Royal Highneſs not leſs conſpicuous by your virtues than by your illuſtrious birth, prompt me to take the liberty of intreating your Royal Highneſs's permiſſion for dedicating to your Royal Highneſs a ſmall volume of Sermons, being the labours of my late huſband: and I am the further emboldened to make this application, as your Royal Highneſs has always, by ſentiment and example, diſcovered

the true diſpoſition of your royal mind, to be ever ready in the promotion of true religion. Your Royal Highneſs's great condeſcention in granting me this permiſſion, ſhall always be deemed as the higheſt honour conferred on,

MADAM,

Your Royal Highneſs's

Moſt dutiful

And moſt devoted humble ſervant,

M. BUCKRIDGE.

ADDRESS.

THE Widow (for whoſe benefit theſe diſcourſes were publiſhed) returns her ſincere and hearty thanks, to the Noblemen, Ladies, Gentlemen and Reverend Clergy who have done her the honour of ſubſcribing to the following Sermons, which have been a ſupport to the unhappy Widow, whom the Almighty was pleaſed to afflict with the loſs of her hand; who humbly begs leave to premiſe, that as they were never intended for publication by her late huſband, nor reviſed or corrected by him, many little inaccuracies may have paſſed unobſerved by the Printer, which ſhe hopes will in ſome meaſure palliate an excuſe. Two more diſcourſes would have been given, as promiſed in the propoſals, but were too obliterated to be tranſcribed.

N. B.

ADDRESS.

N. B. It is with the greateſt concern I am obliged to take notice to my kind ſubſcribers in the County of Surry, that the Rev. Mr. G——, to whom they paid their ſubſcriptions, has been ſo ungenteel (after repeated ſollicitations) only to ſend in their names; but never would acquaint me of the ſums ſubſcribed, or remit me the money, tho' after the death of my late huſband, I diſcharged every ſhilling that was due to him.

M. BUCKRIDGE.

A

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St. LUKE, Chap. ii. v. 10 and 11.

And the angel ſaid to them, fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be unto all people.

For unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord.

WE are met together this day to commemorate the Birth of Chriſt our Saviour; an event of ſuch condeſcention, magnificence and grace to mankind, that all the prophets bear witneſs to it, and the very angels we ſee rejoice at it; not in their own behalf, but ours: And as the memory of it ought continually to be imprinted in our minds; ſo more eſpecially on this ſolemn feſtival, ſet apart for that purpoſe, to teſtify in a becoming manner, our gratitude to God for it. The

whole œconomy of man's redemption was began, carried on, and perfected with no other deſign, and upon no other motive, but to make us happy for ever.

Holy David, the royal anceſtor of our bleſſed Lord, upon the contemplating only at a diſtance ſo rich and ineſtimable a bleſſing to the world, could not forbear crying out in the pious joy and exultation of his heart, Lord! what is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the ſon of man, that thou ſo regardeſt him. If we were therefore to take an eſtimate of the dignity of our nature from the great regard ſhewn us on this day, in this particular, we could not but believe, that that order of beings, which is ſo highly favoured of Almighty God, who has no dependencies to provide for, by favouring any, and is juſtly ſenſible of the deſerts of all, muſt ſtill bear in their minds ſome near reſemblance or likeneſs of the divine perfection, ſome traces of their original excellency; for the angels who kept not their firſt ſtation, fell without relief: but when Man fell, no difficulties were

were judged unconquerable to reſtore him; therefore when we find HIM taken, as it were, into the more endearing embraces of Heaven, and made God's more immediate care and patronage; we cannot but be amazed at the greatneſs of ſuch ſalvation, and even be loſt in awful, tho' pleaſing wonder.

Yes! it was the good-will of our bleſſed Lord, the ſon of God, that firſt moved him to eſpouſe our intereſts in Heaven, and urged him afterward to come on earth, as on this day, to be our Saviour and Deliverer. Much he ſuffered for our ſakes. Had he left us to ourſelves, involved in miſery and guilt, as juſtly ſo he might have done; he would have remained in the ſecure poſſeſſion of perfect happineſs, unmoleſted, and free from every thing that was grievous and uneaſy: but our dear redeemer was reſolutely determined, and fully bent, in ſpite of the oppoſition of the combined forces of ſin and death, to be the captain of our ſalvation, and bravely lead us on to the gates of heaven.

Long indeed had God promiſed that we ſhould be delivered from the hands of our enemies, *i. e.* our ſpiritual ones; to ſerve him without fear; that he would give knowledge of ſalvation unto all his people by the remiſſion of their ſins; that he would give light to them that ſat in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace.

And now, behold! theſe promiſes, as on this day, are fulfilled: the Meſſiah is born, to give us the knowledge of ſalvation, to enlighten our underſtanding, to amend our lives, and by theſe means, in the end, ſave our ſouls. Well then might the angelic meſſenger ſay to the ſhepherds as they were feeding their flocks by night in the fields, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be unto all people; for unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord.

In diſcourſing further on the words of the text, I ſhall fully evince from undeniable proof, that Jeſus of Nazareth was the promiſed

promiſed Meſſiah, and Saviour of mankind, in a plain and regular method; by conſidering, 1ſt. The time when he was born; 2dly. The place of his birth; 3dly. The humble manner of his firſt reception in the world; 4thly. The circumſtances which attended this great tranſaction, and what marvellous intimations theſe were, that the hand of God was moſt immediately concerned to diſpoſe and manage it; and laſtly, Make ſome few neceſſary reflections on the whole.

1ſt. then, I ſhall conſider the time when he was born.——Many perſons have been very inquiſitive to know, either why the incarnation was deferred for ſo long; or elſe, why not longer; or why juſt at that time, and no other. But ſure it is not material to give any reply to ſuch curioſity: it may ſuffice any reaſonable perſon to know, that God, who has the times and ſeaſons in his own power, had determined concerning what time the promiſes of our redemption ſhould be accompliſhed, and would do that which

was

was beſt and moſt fit and proper in every reſpect; wherefore he authoriſed his prophets to deſcribe it moſt exactly to the world, by telling them, long before, what ſhould be the diſpoſition of the affairs of the world; when this ſhould happen; which he only was capable to do, whoſe knowledge was infinite; and certain it was: there was ſuch a remarkable coincidence of events, (too long to repeat here) as inconteſtibly ſhew, that the Meſſias, our Lord, was born at the time ordained and appointed for him by the council of Heaven.

And not only the time, but it ſeemed good to the divine wiſdom alſo, for our greater aſſurance, that the preciſe place of his birth ſhould be named and deſcribed, that not only the country and family of the Meſſiah ſhould be peculiarly known and diſtinguiſhed, but that Bethlehem, the city and place of his nativity, ſhould be tranſmitted down in writing, to all poſterity. The place, indeed, pitched on for ſo remarkable an event, was not of any great eſteem for its wealth, ſtrength, or for memorable atchievements

ments performed in it; or did it riſe up to that degree of fame and reputation, as ſome others that lay round about it: and this is clearly evinced, in the prophecy of Micah. "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, tho' thou be little among the thouſands of Judah; yet out of thee ſhall come He that is to be ruler in Iſrael;" *i. e.* tho' Bethlehem, when theſe words were ſpoken, was a town of no conſideration, yet it was to become honourable and renowned by being the place of the Meſſiah's birth; the place that ſhould produce the Saviour of the world, and ſhew him firſt upon the ſcene of life.

And it is ſurprizing how this prediction of the prophet was fulfilled. His parents it ſeems were inhabitants of Nazareth in Galilee, at a very conſiderable diſtance from any part of Judea, or the city Jeruſalem; wherefore it might reaſonably be expected that our Lord would have been born in Galilee, not in Judea; in Nazareth, not at Bethlehem; eſpecially as it might not be thought ſafe, for a woman under the particular circumſtances, as the virgin mother was, to undertake

undertake a journey of ſuch fatigue and length, when reſt and eaſe at home might be judged more fitting for her. But nothing can fruſtrate the decrees of God, or prevent his divine will being accompliſhed, with every ſingle circumſtance, which he originally intended ſhould belong to it. We read therefore, that at this time a decree came out from the imperial authority, enacting a general aſſeſſment throughout the Roman dominions, and that all perſons taxed or enrolled according to their families, ſhould repair, (whatever their preſent habitation was) to their reſpective cities or native places to which they originally belonged, for the more orderly and regular payment of it; and among the reſt, went up Joſeph, with his virgin ſpouſe, to Bethlehem, the city of David, becauſe they were of his family and lineage.—And ſo it was, *i. e.* God ſo ordered and appointed it, while they were there, the days were accompliſhed that ſhe ſhould be delivered; and brought forth her firſt born ſon according to the prophecy made concerning him.

And

And this brings me, 3dly, to ſpeak of the humble manner of his firſt reception in the world.

And indeed, how diſcouraging to the proſpect of any earthly grandeur was he pleaſed to make his appearance in the world! laid in a manger, deſtitute of all the neceſſary conveniences and common accommodations for him; there being no room in the inn, but what was taken up by the wealthy and honourable, reſorting in multitudes on this occaſion to the place; yet, this was He, the long expected Meſſiah, whom God had particularly promiſed thro' all ages from the time of the creation, who was to anſwer the lofty deſcription of the prophets, and the vaſt expectations which were conceived and rooted deep in the minds of men concerning him! A worldly-minded man indeed might think it would look more hopeful towards the accompliſhment of ſuch great deſigns, if he had been born in ſome ſtately or coſtly fabrick, and in ſuch circumſtances as might be moſt fitting his high condition, and

ſtrike good and venerable impreſſions on him, or thoſe that ſhould have the honour to attend about him: but God's ways are not as our ways; nor his thoughts as our thoughts; he ſaw it would be moſt conducive to the effectual attainment of his own righteous and invariable purpoſes to let him come firſt of all into the world, without any immediate ſigns of government and authority to be conferred on him; whereby this point was gained, that men ſhould turn their thoughts to higher and nobler views than pride or ambition, and look for other intimations of the Meſſiah's dignity, than what meerly conſiſted in outward appearance and ſplendour; which brings me, in the 4th place, to conſider the circumſtances that attended this great tranſaction, and what marvellous intimations there were, that the hand of God was moſt immediately concerned in it.

Very unlikely, no doubt it was, that God ſhould ſend his well-beloved ſon amongſt us, and not afford him ſuch ſignal marks of his approbation and affection, as might

might make it clear and evident to the world that he was fully empowered and authoriſed to do the work for which he ſent him, ſuch as would become ſure and effectual to our ſalvation. Accordingly we find the holy Evangeliſt St. LUKE, here, from whom my text is taken, after letting us know in how lowly and humble a manner Chriſt was born, proceeds to tell us, that an angel from heaven was diſpatched to give notice of his birth, and proclaim it abroad to innocent ſhepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night; and lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord ſhone round about them, and they were ſore afraid, unuſed to ſuch glorious appearances, and could not form any juſt idea of them; but the divine meſſenger, whoſe buſineſs it was, not to ſpread terror and ſurpriſe, but to ſpeak joy and comfort, bids them not to fear what he was going to ſay to to them; ſince he was ordered to impart to them, the firſt diſcovery of thoſe propoſals which would be univerſally profitable to all mankind, and lay the foundation

of praiſe and gratitude over all the world. Behold ! I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord; and as a ſure ſign of what I have delivered to you is the real truth, ye ſhall find the babe lying in the manger of an inn; and be firmly aſſured, that this is He, who ſhall bring deliverance and redemption to his people. And ſuddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the Heavenly Hoſt, praiſing God, and ſaying, glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth, peace, good-will towards men.

This was a viſible and undeniable demonſtration of the eſteem that God had for him, and an open proof that ſomething extraordinary was intended in time, and that he was raiſed up by God for a ſpecial end and purpoſe, to be for ſalvation unto the ends of the earth. It only remains now, that I examine briefly what influence this feſtival day ought to have upon us.

If the incarnation of the ſon of God be, as it appears, an argument of the greatneſs of his love towards us, then are we obliged in gratitude for our high concernment in it, to employ frequently our moſt ſerious thoughts upon it.

One would conceive it next to impoſſible, that ſo great and good a benefactor ſhould ever be forgotten, and that the ſublime theory of the goſpel, brought from Heaven, ſhould not be allowed ſome portion of their time by contemplative, thinking men. The Athenians, we are told by St. Paul, were delighted mightily with telling and hearing new things; the very novelty and unuſualneſs of them were ſufficient recommendation: now the nativity, or birth of Chriſt the Saviour of the world, has in it ſomething perfectly new; never any ſuch thing was before heard of, that the ſon of God ſhould become man, conceived in the womb by the Holy Ghoſt, born of a pure ſpotleſs Virgin, who was ſanctified above all the women in the world, that an angel ſhould be diſpatched out of Heaven to acquaint

quaint her with the news of it, and that he ſhould be a prophet ſent by God to convert men from the vanity and error of their falſe worſhip, to the knowledge of the true religion; to preach righteouſneſs, and to amend the imperfection and defect of human nature, by ſatisfying divine juſtice for the ſins of the world; that he would work miracles by healing the ſick, giving ſight to the blind, and raiſing the dead; that he was of a holy and exemplary life, and would himſelf be for ever in Heaven, ſtanding near to the throne of God, and in the end be the judge of all mankind.

Can all the philoſophy of ancient ſages produce any thing like this; any thing ſo marvellous and beneficial, and withal ſo ſure and certain a truth?

Since the angels then expreſſed ſuch delight and ſatisfaction at the birth of Chriſt, as on this day, not for their own, but for our ſakes; it will ſurely ſuggeſt to our thoughts, that we on our part ſhould laud and magnify God's holy name for ſo rich and ineſtimable a mercy. And

And as to temporal affairs, that we ſhould humbly follow the example of our Lord and Saviour, and ſubmit our wills and actions to be entirely influenced and governed by his, and lay no great ſtreſs on worldly riches; our main ambition ſhould be to ſecure the love, favour and bleſſing of God towards us, by reſolving to devote ourſelves, our ſouls and bodies to his ſervice; and fortifying our ſincere reſolutions at the holy table of our Lord and Saviour. There is no other offering but this, that will be acceptable in his ſight, and none but this will come up to any near proportion with our obligations to him. Let us then employ this holy ſeaſon in acts of temperate joy, and ſolemn gratitude; ſo ſhall we beſt pleaſe our bleſſed Lord and Redeemer, and at length, thro' his merits, obtain everlaſting happineſs and ſalvation.

Now to God the Father, &c.

St. JOHN Chap. xiv. v. 16 and part of the 17.

And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the ſpirit of truth.

THE nearer our bleſſed Lord was to his aſcenſion, and the more illuſtrious his triumph was to be from earth to Heaven, (as at this time) the more care and tenderneſs he expreſſed for his diſciples who had been the conſtant companions of his labours and travels; he promiſed, that he would not leave them comfortleſs, but that one ſhould be ſent to cheer and guide them in his abſence; and according to his infinite veracity, he ſoon made good his moſt gracious promiſe; for ſcarce had the Heavens opened to receive and reinſtate him in the poſſeſſion of his throne, at the right hand of his father, but he cauſed the kingdom of Heaven again to be opened, that his

apoſtles might partake of the abundance of his grace; being no more to deſcend among them, nor yet to make them ſhare with him in his exaltation: as a demonſtration of his future good-will, he ſays, he will pray the father to ſend the bleſſed ſpirit to comfort, inſtruct and protect them in the perillous warfare of chriſtianity, and the arduous work of ſalvation; who was not only to reſt upon them, but to be the conſtant ſupport, relief, and guide of all his diſciples, till the ſecond coming of our Lord to judge the world. This, then, is the ſurpriſing, yet to us highly advantageous myſtery, which we celebrate this joyful day. This is what we ought always, but now more eſpecially to meditate upon; when the comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt, the third perſon in the ever bleſſed and glorious Trinity, was ſent at this time to the apoſtles to rectify many errors and miſtakes in their minds concerning their redeemer, and lead them into all truth concerning him. It muſt be owned that the apoſtles, as well as the reſt of the Jews, were at firſt under many errors in regard to their belief of him, is

plain

plain from ſeveral places of ſcripture; particularly from Luke, Chap. xxiv. where we find them ignorant concerning the prophecies of the Meſſiah; they never imagined he was to ſuffer death upon the croſs; this circumſtance happening to our Saviour, ſo contrary to all their expectations, made them almoſt deſpair of any future favour or deliverance from him: nay, that their hope expired with their Lord at his crucifixion, is manifeſt, becauſe they did not believe his reſurrection; which that they did not do, appears from their being ſurpriſed at it. Certain women, ſay they, made us aſtoniſhed; who, when they found not his body in the tomb ſaid, they had ſeen a viſion of angels, which told them that he was alive. This miſapprehenſion of theirs indeed, proceeded from an opinion generally received among them, that Chriſt the Meſſiah was one day to deliver them from the ſervitude the Romans held them under, and make them a far more glorious people than ever they had been. And this flattering expectation of ſecular greatneſs, was agreeable to fleſh and blood, and the prejudice ſo ſtrongly fixed, that it

continued with them after the reſurrection, as we may ſee by the queſtion they aſked him! Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore again the kingdom to Iſrael? which error our Saviour did not think fit to remove at that time, but ordered them to wait at Jeruſalem for farther ſatisfaction. So that we ſee in the firſt place, there was an abſolute neceſſity for the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, even the ſpirit of truth, (as on this day) to give them right apprehenſions of what they were to teach mankind, and inform themſelves alſo more fully in the myſteries of the Goſpel of their Lord.

This divine grace then we ſee, was neceſſary to fortify their minds in traverſing the various regions of the earth, and make them act with conſtancy and reſolution; had they had nothing but their natural abilities to rely upon, we have reaſon to believe, the great diſproportion between their own ſtrength, and the oppoſition they were likely to meet with from the world in the perillous warfare of chriſtianity, would have diſheartened them not a little;

but

but by this inward reinforcement, we find at once a remarkable fortitude and preſence of mind; being enriched with a new ſtock of unſtudied knowledge, and their tongues able to expreſs it in all languages; they immediately leave Jeruſalem, where they had waited for this promiſe, go out in every place round about, and ſpeak boldly in defence of their doctrine, as the only thing that could bring men to life and immortality. And when they were heard to ſpeak with tongues they never learned, when they could cure all ſorts of diſeaſes, as well as inflict them, kill or make alive, as they thought fit; when they ſeemed as it were to have the power of life and death in their hands, it muſt of courſe draw the eyes of all people towards them, and procure them a univerſal eſteem, wherever they went; as it muſt give a mighty alarm to a ſinful world, and make them ſhake off their lethargy, and awake to a ſerious attention of what was delivered; for if the righteous could ſcarcely be ſaved, where would the ſinner and ungodly appear?

Now after the goſpel of our Saviour was ſufficiently confirmed; after the elders and rulers were converted and became defenders of the faith, and ſuch a ſurpriſing progreſs was made, the extraordinary aid of the Holy Ghoſt was gradually withdrawn; but tho' God has recalled the more viſible ſigns of his preſence, yet he ſtill continues his influence, as certainly, tho' not ſo ſenſibly, as formerly; for the promiſe, as St. Peter aſſures us, was not to them only, but to their children, and to thoſe alſo that were afar off, even as many as God ſhould call thro' all ages to come, which is the ſecond thing I propoſe to ſhew.

And indeed, if we conſider, that human nature continues the ſame; that we have the like weakneſſes and paſſions of former ages, and that the temptations to a ſinful life are frequent and enſnaring, we ſhall very ſoon perceive, that we have as much need of a divine aſſiſtance as ever, to enable us to work out the arduous taſk of our ſalvation; for 'tis to this only the principal virtues belonging to mankind, are aſcribed,

cribed, as we may ſee, (Gal. v. 22.) where meekneſs, temperance and other holy diſpoſitions are called the fruits of the ſpirit: and elſewheſe, the ſame apoſtle affirms, that we are not ſufficient of ourſelves to do any thing, but our ſufficiency is of God. The arguments indeed which prove the divine original of chriſtianity, are ſo convincing, and the reaſonableneſs of its doctrine ſo unqueſtionable, one would be apt to think that a bare propounding them to our underſtandings, was a ſufficient recommendation for our belief and practice; but when we conſider, what ſtrange perverſeneſs there is in our tempers, byaſſed by prejudices and ſenſual affections, we ſhall find that unaided reaſon is not of itſelf ſufficient either to keep or conduct us in the way of holineſs and virtue; his divine grace only, that effectually convinces us of the vanity and emptineſs of the world below, and of the mighty intereſt good perſons have in that above; without this, even written revelation would fall ſhort, and the miniſtrations of men ineffectual; for tho' Paul may

plant,

plant, and Apollos water, yet, 'tis God that gives the increaſe. The good things of this life are preſent and palatable; certain to poſſeſſion, and proportioned to appetite; whereas the other world is out of view, and the ſatisfactions of it too fine for ſin to take hold of: hence it is that reaſon cannot always carry its point, and things temporal are preferred to things eternal. Nothing but grace can overbear the prejudices of fleſh and blood; nothing can amend the will, or ſoften the heart, but he that made it. No man can come to me, ſays our Saviour, unleſs the Father, by the ſecret influence of his ſpirit draw him; but when this divine ſuccour interpoſes, ſin is defeated, and all the ill habits of mind gradually give way; then, as the prophet expreſſes it, the deaf hear, and the obdurate and impenitent relent; the mountains melt like wax at the preſence of the Lord; who turns the hard rock into a ſtanding water, and the flint-ſtone into a ſpringing well. The ſtrongeſt prepoſſeſſions are maſtered, the ſoul made pliable to virtue, and even the barren are fruitful in good works.

Hence

Hence it is, that St. Paul exhorts ſo earneſtly the Philippians to uſe their utmoſt diligence in making ſure their ſalvation, as the divine grace would be ever ready to ſupply the weakneſs of their nature, and ſtep in timely to their relief: it is God, ſays he, that worketh in you both to will and to do. And this divine reinforcement ought to animate every perſon ſeverally, in the performance of their duty. 'Tis that which awakens the powers of the ſoul, and makes it reflect upon thoſe things which relate to her future condition, as in the caſe of Lydia: in the Acts it is ſaid, the Lord opened her heart, that ſhe attended to the things which were ſpoken of Paul. Indeed thereby the mind is brought to a conſiderative temper; this diſpoſes it ſeriouſly to ponder the hopes and fears of religion, and not to live without any care of what becomes of us hereafter. It inclines us to examine the weight and conſequences of things, and give a juſt allowance to a future intereſt. It diſpoſes us to conſider, that we ſhall be capable of happineſs or miſery to all eternity; that pain will be as troubleſome to

us, and pleaſure as acceptable millions of ages hence, as they are now; and that we ought to make a proviſion for the longeſt duration of our being, and not graſp at any worldly ſatisfaction inconſiſtent with it.

It ſets the underſtanding free from prejudice, and enables us to view the full deformity of ſin; that pleaſures are mean and ruinous; and ought to be ſcorn'd by a great, as well as dreaded by a thinking mind. 'Tis this alone, which enforces the reaſonableneſs of religion, and ſhews us the great obligations the divine goodneſs has laid on us to obſerve his commands; that we may admire his infinite love in ſending our Saviour, his ſon, on earth; and gratefully conſider the extent of his mercy to all mankind, by reflecting on the wretched ſtate the world was under before by ſin, and the glorious condition 'tis now made capable of by Chriſt, who fulfilled all righteouſneſs: this is what the apoſtle pray'd, chap. 3d. and 18 ver. that God would enable the Epheſians to do, to make a higher choice, and be in purſuit of nobler objects

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than are to be met with here; and not by ſearching after viſionary joys, loſe the ſweets of genuine pleaſure and true felicity.

Indeed this divine principle cannot fail of prompting men to view with regard the native lovelineſs of virtue or religion; making them eſteem a good action in others, and riſe up to it themſelves, as far as poſſible, approving things that are excellent; it has a happy influence on men of all tempers and conditions, where it has an aſcendency; giving them worthy apprehenſions of God, and favourably inclining them towards the good and welfare of their neighbours; ſuch, no exigences can diſtreſs; no difficulties appall.

But then, to make ourſelves capable of ſo great a bleſſing, it is our duty not to grieve the holy Spirit, whoſe ſacred influence was ſhed ſo abundantly on the apoſtles, as on this day; we muſt take up the Pſalmiſt's reſolution, to walk with a perfect heart, and to ſet no wicked thing before our eyes; we muſt endeavour to prepare our minds for ſo glorious an inhabitant, cheriſh and improve

every pious and religious thought it ſuggeſts, and yield ourſelves obedient to the guidance of its holy conduct in all our ways, and fear nothing but doing an ill action; then has God graciouſly promiſed that his divine grace ſhall ever be ſufficient for us; that he will reward our good intentions and ſincere endeavours with greater attainments of virtue here, and glory and happineſs hereafter in the world to come.

Which God of his infinite mercy grant, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all glory and honour, power and dominion, henceforth and for ever.

ACTS, Chap. viii. v. 17.

Then laid they their hands on them; and they received the Holy Ghoſt.

SOON after our Lord's aſcenſion into Heaven, when the Apoſtles which were at Jeruſalem heard that the people of Samaria had received the word of God, they ſent unto them Peter and John to confirm them in their new faith, who, when they were come down into that region, prayed for them; and when they laid their hands on them, (as my text expreſſes it) they immediately received the Holy Ghoſt; and no one can doubt, but what they did at that time, they ought to have done, and had power ſo to do. And what was then deemed neceſſary for the preſent exigence of affairs, may without all queſtion,

upon

upon an occaſion of the like nature, be done again; and though the extraordinary gifts of thoſe times be ceaſed, the work being long ſince done for which they were more eſpecially given, yet that the ordinary power of the apoſtles continues ſtill in their ſucceſſors, is plain from hence; becauſe the work, for which that power was given, is ſtill doing, and will continue till the end of all things; their errand being to perform continually whatever is neceſſary for the perfecting of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, for the edifying of the body of Chriſt. Yes! ſo long as this world laſts, and men remain dwelling upon the earth, ſo long will Chriſt the Saviour of mankind have a church here below; and as long as his church is here, ſo long will he have a ſelect and peculiar order of men, ſome more immediately appointed to govern his peculiar people, and others to guide them in the ways of truth and peace; and in the end, conduct them to his everlaſting kingdom. For ſo he aſſured his apoſtles (Mat. xxiii. and v. 18.) when he came and ſpake unto them, ſaying, Power is given unto me in

Heaven

Heaven and Earth; go ye therefore into all nations; baptiſing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you; and lo! I am with you always unto the end of the world. Not with the apoſtles in perſon indeed; for they all finiſhed their courſe of life not long after: therefore, it muſt neceſſarily be meant, their ſucceſſors; for the ſame divine power which enabled the apoſtles to perform their function while living, fitted them alſo for ordaining others, and keeping up a ſucceſſive miniſtry. How far this power, as to conſecration or confirmation is principally to be exerciſed at this time, is my preſent purpoſe; which to conſider the words of the text, offer to us, firſt, the ſolemnity of St. Peter and St. John, laying on of hands, that ancient rite of bleſſing by prayer, in order to confirm the new converts of Samaria (diſciples) as a pattern to all ages. 2dly, The qualification of thoſe who come to be confirmed, and 3dly, The great benefit, or gift, immediately derived therefrom; the grace of God, or the influence

ence of the Holy Spirit, which is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the faithful diſcharge of every man's duty, civil or religious.

1ſt. Then, the words of the text offer to us the ſolemnity of the apoſtles laying on of hands, that ancieut rite of bleſſing by prayer.

And from the ſolemn inſtitution of laying on epiſcopal hands, I think, we may ſee ſomething of the divine condeſcention and goodneſs; becauſe, while we are in theſe weak, frail, and earthly bodies, ſenſible things are apt to make quicker and deeper impreſſions on our minds, eſpecially upon ſuch as are leſs thoughtful; therefore it pleaſed God to comply with their own imperfect ſtate, and to apply and ſanctify ſome external rites to aſſure us of his merciful intention to us; to put us in mind of our duty, and to be the means of conveying an inward and ſpiritual grace to us, ſuch as confirmation; whoſe celebration (by prayer) hath nothing that is burthenſome and difficult in it.

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In the inſtitution alſo of the Holy Sacraments of our religion, Baptiſm, and the Lord's Supper, we have further evidence of God's grace and goodneſs to us; they being leſs troubleſome and expenſive rites than any practiſed under the Moſaic law; and more beneficial to thoſe who conform in their practice to them, from the natural weakneſs of the outward elements: Let no man take occaſion to undervalue, or think himſelf above ſuch ordinances: what tho' water of itſelf can do nothing to waſh away ſin, and purify the conſcience; and what tho' bread and wine in their own nature, are altogether unavailable to nouriſh the ſouls of men unto eternal life; yet in virtue of the divine benediction and influence, they are mighty and powerful to work all thoſe effects for which they were ordained. Tho' we cannot feel the immediate impreſſions of grace, and its diſtinct workings in us, the power of God is not tyed, or limited to any means; it can, and ſometime does work without them; as when our Saviour ſpoke the word only, and the man was

 healed.

healed. But whenſoever he appoints any means, we deal unkindly both with God and ourſelves too, if we can think they will prove vain and ineffectual to the ends for which he appointed them, if we uſe them as we ought to do. It is our duty to uſe the appointed means, in due manner and ſeaſon; and if any thing ſhould happen to ſeem to us diſproportionable to the effects for which they are ordained, faith muſt lead us above ſenſe, and teach us to admire and adore more and more the inconceivable operations of the divine wiſdom and goodneſs; and now at the plain, but ſolemn office of confirmation, by our dioceſan, are we to look for God's grace and bleſſing in the uſe of it.

And this brings me in the ſecond place to conſider the qualifications of thoſe, in the text, who were confirmed by St. Peter and St. John.

You may obſerve in holy writ, that as ſoon as ever our Lord had given his diſciples a commiſſion to form a church, he inſtructs

ſtructs them to baptiſe in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt. This was the one ſhort and important leſſon to be firſt inſtilled and inculcated into the new converts thro' every nation; from whence we may juſtly infer, that the faith in theſe three perſons as divine, in oppoſition to all the gods of the Gentiles, which the people of Samaria at that time worſhiped, was to be the eſſential article of their new faith. And it is certainly right, that if men were to be trained up to a true knowledge of God here, in order to be admitted to ſee him as he is in the life that ſhall be hereafter, they ſhould be made acquainted with how many and what perſons ſtand in that character; that by his properly ordering them in ſuch a manner, as is fitting to this imperfect ſtate, they may attract ſo high an eſteem for the three divine perſons in the God-head, as may better prepare them for the fuller viſion and fruition of the ſame hereafter in glory.

For the mind of man in religion, before it is well inſtructed and grounded, is a very

uncertain thing; doubtful which way to incline, and what it ſhould moſt adhere to; and as in matters of faith, there are diverſe ſorts of doctrines, whereby it is at times toſs'd to and fro; ſo in matters of practice, there are numberleſs rites and uſages, which, as all cannot be obſerved, ſo neither can all be omitted; and therefore to determine what are needful and becoming, there can be no better method to any ſincere, good and humble chriſtian, than to acquieſce, where his ſuperiors have interpoſed their wiſdom and authority as fitteſt to judge, and moſt likely to know, what is moſt beneficial to be done in ſuch caſes, and at the ſame time moſt agreeable to decency and order, and the purity of the goſpel. Therefore as to the adult, or grown perſons of Samaria, who had early received the rudiments of the word of God, from ſome one or other as is ſuppoſed of the ſeventy diſciples, being educated in a quite different religion, and ſo muſt be imagined to have entertained ſeveral notions and principles, which would very difficultly be rooted out,

it was very requiſite and neceſſary, that there ſhould be in them at leaſt, a general knowledge and perſuaſion of the truth, excellency, and divinity of the chriſtian religion, that Jeſus, who had been preached to them, was a teacher ſent from heaven, the true Meſſias, and ſon of God, and profeſs their future reſolution to learn and underſtand every branch and article of his doctrine, and govern themſelves according to the rules of it, before they were admitted to baptiſm; that when St. Peter and St. John came to lay their hands on them for the further confirmation of their faith, they might receive the Holy Ghoſt to their eternal ſalvation.

The caſe of infants, indeed, in our church, is of a different nature and conſideration from theſe; for though they have neither a general nor a diſtinct knowledge of the terms of the goſpel, yet they are not incapable of being initiated into it by baptiſm, which was ordained of God to be a ſign or ſeal; an earneſt or pledge of his fa-

favourable and gracious intentions, to pardon the ſins of all mankind, who ſhould hereafter believe in him; to be a means of conveying his grace to us, and make us partakers of eternal life thro' faith in his ſon. As for ſuch therefore, who by their parents pious care have been baptiſed in their infancy, and early pre-engaged to a holy life; it is highly expedient that as ſoon as they are competently inſtructed in the principles of the goſpel of Chriſt, they be preſented to the biſhop; and in the preſence of God and the congregation, there renew the ſolemn vow and promiſe, which was made in their names at their baptiſm; and in their own perſons ratify and confirm the ſame; acknowledging themſelves bound to believe and do thoſe things which their godfa thers, godmothers, or ſponſors undertook for them; and receive gladly the biſhop's ſolemn benediction by the laying on of his hands; as it will very much tend to their future increaſe and eſtabliſhment in true virtue and goodneſs.

If ever their parents hope to have any joy

joy or conſolation in their offspring grown up, let them be careful to ſeaſon them betimes with principles of piety and religion, as laying a ſolid foundation for their well-being, both in time and eternity.

It is hard to ſay preciſely, at what age they become capable of knowing what we mean by Almighty God, by heaven, or by hell; ſome imperfect notion of theſe things may certainly be wrought into them very ſoon; and they ſeldom fail to retain their firſt notices as they grow up. They may be told, that God will be angry with them when they do amiſs; and that he will torment them in a place hereafter, where they will feel exceſſive pain, and be more ſenſible of ſmart than they are now; and at the ſame time it would be proper to inform them, alſo, that God will be kind to them and bleſs them, and give them all the good things their heart can wiſh, provided they do well. In ſuch a method as this, may the minds of children be early formed up to virtue. As to teaching them the church catechiſm, wherein is contained

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the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, it is a duty ſo well known to every parent, guardian, or maſter, who have the care over them, that it may ſuffice, (one would think) barely to mention it; and they need not doubt, but that if they faithfully and truly perform their parts, God will do his towards them, by confirming them in all goodneſs, and cauſing them to grow daily more and more in grace. Such was his mercy and goodneſs towards the adult or young converts of Samaria, in the text, ſoon after they had received the word of the Lord with unfeigned faith, the apoſtles were ſent to lay their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt. Now as faith in Chriſt is a rational, firm, and ſettled perſuaſion, that the doctrines delivered in the goſpel are certain and indubitable truths which God has made known to the world by his Son, when any perſons of competent age offer themſelves to be confirmed and receive the divine benediction by laying on of hands, we ought to ſuppoſe that each of them is inſtructed in, or capable of making this, or ſuch like profeſſion of their faith. I am

I am fully perſuaded in my heart, and do willingly confeſs with my mouth, that there is an infinite ſelf-exiſtent being, the Father of all things, eſpecially of angels and men; but more peculiarly the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and that there is but one ſuch excellent being (whom we call God) who by his almighty power made the Heaven and the Earth; and all things viſible and inviſible out of nothing; and in conſequence of this belief, I do acknowledge that it is my duty to fear and honour him, and keep his commandments; and eſteem nothing in Heaven or Earth in compariſon of him.

And, likewiſe, I am fully perſuaded, and freely acknowledge as a truth, that there was, and is a perſon, who by the miniſtry of an angel was called Jeſus, the Saviour of the world; who, according to the divine determination, came into the world to teach us the will of God concerning our duty and happineſs, and to reconcile us to God, by the ſacrifice of himſelf,

ſelf, intercede for us, and bleſs us; and alſo to rule, govern, and defend us; and that no other is, in ſuch manner, the Son of God, as he is. And being thus perſuaded, I plainly perceive how much it is my duty and intereſt at all times to hear his doctrine, obey his precepts, rely upon his promiſes, and give him my whole heart, that he may rule in it abſolutely by his ſpirit, and in due time tranſlate me to his heavenly kingdom; for that at an appointed day we are told, he ſhall come from heaven in power and great glory, and all the holy angels with him; and placing himſelf upon the throne of his glory, with the voice of an arch-angel, and with the trump of God, ſhall in the moſt commanding manner, ſummon and gather all nations before him, both the quick and dead, and try them in truth, righteouſneſs and equity, according to their works: and moreover, my firm belief is, that there is an infinite eternal ſpirit, who in a peculiar and incomprehenſible manner, together with the Father and the Son, is the author of our ſalvation, if

we follow his guidance, and let him rule in our hearts by his grace and influence.

Which brings me to the third thing propoſed, the great benefit derived from confirmation, or the laying on of hands, by perſons ordained for that high office, the influence of the holy ſpirit, which is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the faithful diſcharge of every man's duty.

Nothing is more evident, than that divine grace is founded upon man's weakneſs, and inſufficiency to do his own duty; God, therefore, mercifully, ſo far as we are weak, and deſire it of him, offers us ſtrength out of his own treaſure; with this proſpect, that receiving it thence, we might behave ourſelves more reverently and thankfully, under the ſenſe of the obligation: to every ingenuous perſon therefore that conſiders his want, and applies himſelf for the gift by appointed means, ſuch as confirmation and prayer, or other divine rites, God gives it liberally; and the meaſure of giving to each, is as much as he needeth: for as

God's providence has ordered a diverſity of ſtates in human life, producing a diverſity of duty; ſo he has ordained diverſe gifts, and diverſe meaſures of the ſame gifts to be diſtributed reſpectively among men, that no man might neceſſarily be wanting to the duty of his particular ſtate; to every private perſon, ſo much as is neceſſary for a private ſalvation; and to every one of a public character (biſhops, and others of a high degree) ſo much as is neceſſary to promote the common ſalvation; Salvation of our ſouls, and the advancement of Chriſt's kingdom here on earth, being the only ſcope and deſign of all God's diſtributions.

Hence it appears, that the doctrines and rites of our religion, are not meer ſpeculations and high notions; but are to be conſidered as divine principles to affect our hearts, and govern our lives; and God grant that all here preſent, both old and young, (being ever ready in righteouſneſs and true holineſs all our days)

days) may give a reaſon of the hope that is in them, when the great ſhepherd of their ſouls, Jeſus Chriſt, ſhall appear at the laſt day, that they may be confirmed blameleſs before the throne of grace, and receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

1ſt Book of Chron. Chap. xxix. v. 27 and 28.

Thirty and three years reigned he in Jeruſalem, and he died in a good old age, full of days, riches and honour.

TRULY honourable is the character here given us in the text by the ſacred penman of royal David; and it is to be obſerved, there was not any one thing which more animated men in ancient times, as well as modern, to excell in virtue or valour, than an earneſt deſire they had to leave a good name behind them, which put them in their ſeveral ſtations and capacities on doing great things, and performing glorious exploits, making themſelves not only acceptable to Heaven, but held in admiration alſo by the world: the people ever telling of their excellent deeds,

deeds, and the congregation ſhewing forth their praiſe: and certainly were there any thing on earth that could bear a firm and abſolute dependance upon it, perſons of high birth and great power have the beſt claim to our truſt and reliance; as the rank and ſtation which they fill, by the order of providence, demands the moſt ſignal token of reſpect to them; but yet human hopes and expectations are ſtrictly the Lord's claim, and muſt be ſet principally upon him, who gives us all things. The moſt potent in wiſdom, wealth, reſolution and extent of dominion, have but a limited ſtrength in their ſeveral kinds of power, and cannot at all junctures bring their beſt laid deſigns to perfection; and ſooner or later, at God's appointed time, when their breath goes forth, there is no help in them; the life of the greateſt ſovereign is as fleet and brittle as the humbleſt ſubject; ſo cruel is death, and inflexible; crowns and ſcepters cannot command its diſtance, nor the very virtues and perfections of princes move its compaſſion; neither the tears, the wiſhes, nor the devotion of a whole kingdom; no,

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nor of proſtrate majeſty can bribe or retard one ſtroke. It knows not how to relent when once the hand is lifted up to give the ſudden fatal blow.

You will eaſily imagine the ſolemn and melancholy event which has ſo recently happened, directed me to the words of the text, which repreſent to us not only the death but the epitaph alſo of the man after God's own heart; parallel to which, in every circumſtance, is that of our late gracious and much lamented ſovereign. As the former reign'd thirty three years in Jeruſalem, ſo did the latter the ſame proportion of time in Great Britain; juſtice and mercy guiding all his actions; and as one died in a good old age, ſo did the other, full of days, riches and honour; and while the fleſh reſts in hope, the ſoul liveth for ever, and has already taſted its celeſtial joys; bleſſed are the dead, ſaid the voice from heaven, for evermore, which die in the Lord; for they reſt from their labours.

It is a queſtion of great moment, and been often aſk'd, what is the ſtate of the dead after this tranſitory life is ended? but it is a queſtion difficult to anſwer, what or how great the happineſs or miſery of men reſpectively may be, no one is able to repreſent to you; theſe things are yet in a great meaſure within the veil: by all aſſiſtance we can obtain from the principles of reaſon, and even from revelation, we can ſee but a little way into the future ſtate; our knowledge of the world of ſpirits is neither full nor clear; yet ſo much knowledge of the condition of the faithful and good, who have left this world, we may gain, as may be of ſervice to us in preparing to follow, for they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the ſaints; for we are aſſured they are bleſſed who die in the Lord.

The ſtate of the dead then may be conſidered, firſt, as to the body: yet in a comparative view it is little matter what becomes of that, ſo the immortal inhabitant of

of it be ſafe; yet as it is a noble ſtructure, and for many years been our companion and our familiar friend, ſo is it one day by the will of God, to be rebuilt and re-edified; tho' left for a while to be intombed in the duſt of the earth, to ſleep there till the laſt trumpet ſhall awake it. Secondly, as to the particular bleſſedneſs of the ſoul after death, we may eaſily, without great care, wade beyond our depth, and loſe ourſelves in tracing an inviſible ſpirit through new worlds. Yet as far as the ſcriptures of truth lead us, as far as obſervation and probable conjecture will carry us, we may conſider, firſt, the ſoul as parting from the body: let us then, 2dly, as far as we are able, follow the ſoul of our late brother, and view it as conducted to hear the divine will concerning it, preparatory to the judgment of the great day; and thirdly, placed in it's eternal ſtate of happineſs. Firſt, if we view it as looſing from this coaſt of mortality, and launching into eternity in the momentous article of death, we cannot but conſi-

der our ſouls in very differing tempers, and agitated by very differing paſſions; how loth are ſome to go, how reſigned others to God; though they ſee not the way clear, nor heaven open to them, as St. Stephen did; yet they endeavour after a dutiful and rational ſubmiſſion to the will of theſupreme governor of the world, they conſent to go, at the divine order, though they could wiſh for a longer day. Others leave the world between hope and dread, doubtful how it may be with them, they are not able to ſtay, yet are afraid to go. Impoſſible indeed it is to paint all the infinite variety of paſſions and the ſtrong agitations with which ſouls are affected in theſe awful moments. It is however eaſy to judge, in what temper and frame, and in what ſtate and condition we ſhall all of us wiſh to die: but wiſhes alone will not do. Would we die the death of the righteous, we muſt do all things unto the glory of the Lord here; our fruit muſt be unto holineſs, and then our end will be everlaſting life.

Surrounded poſſibly, by ſome of the heavenly angels who had ſo gladly and ſucceſsfully guarded it while here, in all the paths of virtue, thoſe benevolent ſpirits rejoicing at its now being made partaker of their bliſs. And what tranſports of joy muſt fill the ſoul of the upright man, entirely approved by its Lord and Judge, for it's victory over the world, it's terrors and temptations, unto manſions prepared for it; manſions of purity, righteouſneſs and peace, of love, ſerenity and joy: be thou faithful unto death, ſays our Saviour, and I will give thee a crown of life. There he is what he would be; there he ſees what he believed in; there we may reaſonably preſume he enjoys what he hoped for: all his patriot labours, his conſtancy and patient endurance for the good of his people is acknowledged to his honour; he reviews his dangers paſt with wonder, and adores the grace by which he eſcaped, and was delivered from them all; that he is abundantly ſatisfied with his new habitation. And has nothing before him

him but ſucceſſive ſcenes of peace and happineſs thro' eternal ages; the gain is his, the loſs is truly ours; as will more fully appear from the excellency of the perſon whom God has taken from us, and what leſſons of ſerious inſtruction we may draw from it.

Here is the death of one of the greateſt men upon earth, a partner in all the joys and fortunes of his kingdom, and who, by the wiſdom of his councils at home, and the terror of his arms abroad, hath made his own people conſiderable among the nations. This is He concerning whom we were ready to ſay, that we ſhall ſit many years happily under his protection in our native land, enjoying all the reaſonable comforts of life; yet behold he is ſubject to mortality, and the common ſtroke of death. Princes are indeed termed gods in ſcripture, becauſe their authority bears ſome reſemblance to that of the God of Heaven; therefore they are called the children of the moſt high; but they muſt die like other men; 'tis the hand of the Lord hath wrought this, in whoſe hand is the ſoul of every

every living creature, and the breath of all mankind. The leſſon that we derive from this view of things, is to take heed that we let God principally be the ſolid and everlaſting reſt and refuge of our ſouls, whoſe life is eternal; for tho' we derive many bleſſings through the influence of princes, yet it muſt be remembered they are not immortal, and 'tis appointed that all men are to die; they are always within a moment's reach of the inviſible ſtate and region of ſpirits; 'tis but the wink of an eye, the ceſſation of the pulſe, the ſtoppage of our breath, and we are no more in a real ſtate of health: with a firm conſtitution, and ſtrength above the proportion of his years, George the Second, our late royal monarch, was ſuddenly ſmitten with a mortal faintneſs, and hurried away from the earth in an unexpected hour: vain was the ſkill of phyſicians in that melancholy hour; the zeal and tenderneſs of his domeſticks were vain; they had only the ſad opportunity of ſeeing a dying ſovereign, and taking their laſt long leave of ſo good and ſo deſirable a maſter. It is our duty

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to mourn ſolemnly and deeply; and yet to temper our ſorrow with the ſtrong hopes we have of his everlaſting felicity. And the leſſon we ſhould learn from ſo remarkable an occurrence, is to awaken our ſouls to a conſtant readineſs, for we know not when we ſhall be called, whether at even, or at midnight, or in the morning, at the interpoſing will of the almighty. Should we ſurvey the perſonal excellencies and royal virtues that adorned his character, it would exceed the meaſure of the time alloted me; but in gratitude to the memory of ſo good a prince, I muſt mention a few. It appears he was endowed with more than ordinary accompliſhments of mind; nature had done a great deal; education and converſation of the beſt kind more ſtill; and moſt of all, the fear of the Lord: He being the principal ſupport of the true religion eſtabliſhed among us, yet not without due temper to the ſcrupulous, his wiſdom was made known by the wonderful ſkill he had attained to, for the governing of time, upon which all management much depends; his hours were

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ſo adjuſted to the ſeveral affairs of his own and others, that notwithſtanding the multiplicity of them, he found a ſeaſon for every thing. He was a prince of great firmneſs of ſoul, his heart was all courage, and thoſe virtues ſhone ſo much the brighter, by how much the higher ſtation they were placed in. Good-will and friendly benevolence to mankind are excellent diſpoſitions in any private perſon; but when they are joined to majeſty, they carry an illuſtrious reſemblance of our maker. And it muſt be owned by every one, that the happineſs of his people ſeemed to be his conſtant wiſh, and his higheſt joy: in a word, he was a king who ſought to oblige all that he had to do with, and to make them eaſy and happy, who were to be wrought on by the condeſcention of his goodneſs; and ſure it muſt be a real loſs, when ſuch a ruler, ſuch a benefactor is taken from the earth. Yet, bleſſed! thrice bleſſed be the name of our God! that ſo long guarded his precious life from day to day, and continued him to a good old age, ſo as to die as David did, at a comfortable

length of years, full of days, riches and honour.

And 'tis an inſtance of divine mercy, that we have ſuch an illuſtrious prince as George the third ot ſucceed to the throne, with ſuch a general ſatisfaction and applauſe of his nobles and people, who have been well inſtructed in the goodneſs and the excellency of our conſtitution, that he may ſway the ſcepter with greater prudence and ſucceſs; educated under the eye, as it were, of an illuſtrious princeſs, his mother, of an admirable temper and diſpoſition; who has not only learnt the rules of virtue herſelf, but teaches them by her daily practice; and may the divine bleſſing proſper her care.

To conclude; as we have been this day paying the tribute of due honour to the memory of our late gracious ſovereign, who exceeded all his royal predeceſſors in age, ſo let us now ſubmit ourſelves to our new monarch with all chearfulneſs, as the guardian of our religion and liberty, and not mention

mention his name at any time without a becoming reſpect; let us offer our daily and ardent prayers to the Lord, that he may long live a tranſcendent bleſſing to the nation and the proteſtant world; and fulfil with honour all the promoſing proſpects that his ſublime character and virtue in a leſs exalted ſtation have given; that he may attain and ſecure to us the bleſſing of an honourable peace, and that every year of his reign, as it paſſes, may be crowned with ſome extraordinary mark of the divine favour; till at length he alſo, like his royal grandfather, full of days and glory, may reſign calmly his ſoul into God's hands, and leave his memory valuable and dear to all poſterity.

Which God of his mercy grant, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, be all honour and glory, power and dominion, henceforth and for ever.

Pſalm xciv. v. 22.

But the Lord is my Refuge; and my God is the ſtrength of my confidence.

WE are met together here for the ſolemn humiliation of ourſelves before Almighty God, in order to the ſupplicating his favour for our paſt iniquities, and the imploring his bleſſing and protection to us, in continuing thoſe mercies to us we enjoy, and averting thoſe calamities from us, we may have reaſon to apprehend; and more particularly his giving a happy and ſpeedy end to that two-fold war of Spain and France, the king and kingdom are at preſent engagd in. Care hath been already taken by all human means; but, on this day, appointed by the wiſdom of our king, other methods are moſt happily thought on

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for the attaining ſucceſs to our affairs; namely, by having recourſe to Almighty God; who, when we have done all we can, is the governor of the world, and will do what he pleaſeth; but yet will always do that which is beſt for mankind, and that too which is beſt for us, if we be capable objects of his favour; and to make ourſelves ſuch if poſſible, is the occaſion of this ſolemn faſt, to ſollicit us to return unto the Lord with all our hearts, in ſincerity and truth.

Therefore as one of the firſt principles that is planted in the nature of man; and which lies at the very root and foundation of his being, is the deſire of his own preſervation and happineſs; what way or method for the doing it is more proper or becoming than to engage by faith and good works the power and providence of God on his ſide; and here we find, in the text, that eminent warriour adviſing his people not to be ſo confident of their own ſtrength as to go thro' the perils and dangers of war, without calling in the aid and aſ-

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ſiſtance of him who is the king of kings, and ſupreme governor of the world; I will not truſt in my bow, it is not my ſword that ſhall ſave me, ſays he.

The various revolutions of ſtates, that have happened in all ages of the world, and the ſtrange ſucceſſes which even a ſmaller number have often met with over a greater, may ſufficiently teach us, that victory is not always dependant upon human ſtrength alone; it being often ſeen that many unexpected helps and means are thrown in by divine contrivance. As God is infinitely wiſe and powerful, he both knows how, and is able to aſſiſt us; and as he is infinitely good, (if we be not wanting to ourſelves through ſin) he is certainly willing to ſuccour us: the ways he makes uſe of to do this are not always perſpicuous; but this is often owing to our want of attention; he, nevertheleſs, though inviſible, as holy Job divinely ſpeaks, doth great things paſt finding out; yea, and wonders without number.

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The perſons he chuſes to be the objects of his favour and beneficence, are all mankind, and they who experience moſt of it, are the good and virtuous; he being ever, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, moſt active in their behalf in times of public calamity or need; for a kind father will be always moſt ready to aſſiſt his offſpring, when they are in moſt danger of being hurt or ruined.

From what has been premiſed, you may ſee what a ſtrong foundation there is in reaſon to put our truſt in God. How juſtly therefore may every good man, or true penitent, adopt the language of the text, and ſay with holy David, the Lord is my refuge, and God is the ſtrength of my confidence.

All human means are doubtleſs to be uſed in extricating ourſelves out of any difficulties; but the ſucceſs of thoſe means is is the hands of him who ſuperintends and controuls the univerſe; the only ruler of Princes as well as People.

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My deſign, therefore, on this great and ſolemn day of humiliation, whilſt the hoſt goeth forth againſt our enemies, is to recommend and inculcate a religious dependance on the divine protection; for which end, I will here firſt conſider the advantages of it.

Secondly ſhew, what ſort of behaviour we ſhould put on to attain ſuch advantages.

Firſt, let us conſider the advantages of the divine protection.

And indeed, the very thought of our being under the influence and ſafeguard of an all-wiſe, all-powerful, all-merciful God, one would think, ſhould diſſipate our fears, and fill our hearts with magnanimity and joy. For what policy of man can outwit the knowledge of the Lord; or what human force can be a match for his power? what friendſhips or allies can be ſo ſafely depended on as infinite goodneſs? how ſure of ſucceſs will all outward means be, that are directed and ſuccoured by the hand of

heaven? with what chearful circumſpection may the truly religious ſtateſman conſult and deliberate for his country's honour? with what noble fire may the ſoldier thus aided fight for its glory and ſafety?

Whoever ſerves his country either at home or abroad under a due ſenſe of divine providence, acts the part of an honeſt and religious man; and ſhould his endeavours not always be ſucceſsful, he will ſecure to himſelf the pleaſing reflection of a virtuous and patriot mind, on having done his duty; the ſureſt way for any to hope for or expect ſucceſs, is to have a lively faith in God's protecting providence; for as St. Paul ſays, if God be for us, who can be againſt us, Rom. 8th.

Diſtreſs and danger of any kind are apt to excite devotion and piety, even in the minds of thoſe who at other times are forgetful of their creator; and of all the calamities which mankind are ſubject to on this ſide the grave, few are ſo terrible and alarming as war; and when the judgments of God are let looſe on the earth, ſurely the

inhabitants of the world will learn righteouſneſs, and the lovers of pleaſure be awakened from their ſpirit of ſlumber. The devaſtation and ruin which many innocent people abroad, both in Germany and America, have ſuffered of late, from this calamity, are too recent to be forgotten; the bare remembrance of which, muſt naturally inſpire the moſt awful ſentiments of holy fear and religious affection towards God. This terrible phœnomenon does in a manner force men to look up to heaven for redreſs; even to hear of whole cities and towns, at once laid in aſhes, amidſt the horrid ſhrieks and groans of dying mortals; men, women, and children crying out in vain; mothers ſcreaming, not only for themſelves, but their tender infants; young and old, high and low in a manner maſſacred by the ſcalping knife or the devouring ſword: But to ſee or feel the cataſtrophe of ſuch a ſcene, in any manner, what anguiſh muſt it raiſe in the human breaſt; where could they fly for ſuccour? all worldly help was impotent and vain. No! nothing can ſtand them in the leaſt

ſtead, in any place or at any time under ſuch heart-felt diſtreſs, but an humble and willing reſignation to God; his power and goodneſs can preſerve us unhurt amidſt th wrecks of war; or ſhould we ſink in ſudden ruin here, the divine mercy can extend itſelf to us hereafter, and recompence our temporal ſuffering with joy eternal.

And here, ſure no advice can be more ſuitable, than that which the prophet Azariah gave that good man Aſa, in his days. (Chron. xv. v. 2.) the Lord is with you, while you are with him; and if ye ſeek him, he will be found of you; but if you forſake him, he will forſake you: the only way then is to make a due acknowledgement of our reſpective ſins and errors; if we ſincerely do this, and rectify our conduct, wherein it is amiſs, we do all that is in our power; and we cannot doubt but that the good God of Heaven and Earth, will let us take ſhelter under the wings of his mercy. For as a Father pitieth his children, ſays Holy David, the pious author

of

of my text, ſo will the Lord be merciful to them that fear him. And the wiſe ſon of Syrach alſo diſplays the goodneſs of God in words equally comfortable and affecting. Look at the generations of old, and ſee: did ever any truſt in the Lord, and was confounded? or did any abide in his fear, and was forſaken? And this is the true way of keeping the faſt, this day, which we are commanded to obſerve, by royal authority; for the truth of which let us hear what the prophet Iſaiah ſays; is it ſuch a faſt, as I have choſen, for a man to ſpread ſack-cloth and aſhes under him; will you call this a faſt, and acceptable to the Lord. No! Is not this the faſt that I have choſen? a ſerious recollection of your paſt conduct in ſorrow for ſin, and ſuch repentance as produces amendment of life; to unlooſe the bonds of wickedneſs; to undo the heavy burthens, and to let the oppreſſed go free. Suitable degrees of abſtinence may indeed prove a uſeful help to virtue; but we are not required to faſt ſo ſtrictly, or with ſuch ſeverity, as to unfit ourſelves by abſtinence from bodily food from other duties; God requires mercy, not ſacrifice.

Let

Let us therefore ſtudy to gain the divine favour and protection by the practice of rational piety, which conſiſts not in outward ſeverities, but rather in a conformity of heart and life to the will of God; to which let us add a dutiful obedience to our lawful ſovereign king George, maintaining a hearty union among ourſelves; by which means we may chearfully hope for an increaſe of victory and triumphs over our enemies during the war; and in the end, ſee a glorious return of peace to our country; a bleſſing ſo long deſired and wiſhed for, and now prayed for by every good and wiſe man.

Now to God the Father, &c.

LUKE, Chap. xviii, v. 10, 11, 12, 13,

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Phariſee, the other a Publican. The Phariſee ſtood and prayed thus with himſelf; God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this Publican; I faſt twice in the week, I give tithe of all that I poſſeſs. The Publican ſtanding afar off, would not lift up ſo much as his eyes to heaven, but ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a ſinner.

IT is wonderful to obſerve how very partial men judge, in favour of thoſe actions which either thro' complexion, convenience, or cuſtom, they are moſt addicted to; they are too apt to flatter themſelves, by unequal compariſons, and

and conclude their ſins to be venial, becauſe there are others more exceeding ſinful: thus the miſerly worlding, deteſts all luxury and intemperance, rails at, and oftentimes compaſſionates thoſe who are guilty of ſuch exceſſes, but always excuſes his own niggardlineſs of heart, under the plauſible names of frugality and good-huſbandry. The good-natured man pleads a generous and hoſpitable ſpirit; that the good things of this world were deſigned and beſtowed upon us for convenience of life and pleaſure; and therefore concludes his condition to be much happier and ſafer than the covetous, perſimonious worldling's. He thinks the Phariſee alſo, (where my text relates to) overlooks his cenſoriouſneſs and pride, and congratulates his own happineſs, becauſe not conſcious of the guilt of adultery and extortion. It were eaſy to expatiate on this head, and ſhew upon what weak grounds men delude themſelves, and inſult over others, by ſuch deceitful pretexts, and that there is ſcarce any vice, however injurious in its own nature, or dangerous in its conſequence, that may not plead in its excuſe,

excuſe, or be compared with ſome other which is as bad or worſe; but tho' ſuch fallacious equivocations may gratify mens corrupted judgments or quiet their ſtupified conſciences, yet God is no ſuch reſpecter of iniquity as to pardon any upon ſuch vain pretences; 'tis impoſſible to compromiſe for ſin, or compound with God by the performance of one duty for the violation of another: in all our actions and deſigns, we muſt aim at the character given to Nathaniel, and endeavour to become Iſraelites indeed, in whom is no guile. Whatever outward homage and ſhew the gods of the heathens, who were only the work of mens hands, might be contented with, yet the holy pſalmiſt was ſenſible that the true God, the great ſearcher of hearts, required truth in the inward parts; and therefore ſays, if we regard iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not hear our prayer. This therefore we muſt make our principal deſign, our eſpecial care, to get the better of our favourite ſin, our darling paſſion; and when this is done, we ſhall find no difficulty in all the reſt: and

yet how uſual a thing is it for men to let this alone; any other vice, but that, they can handle well enough, and ſometimes too harſhly too, when they ſee it in other men; but as for their own ſore, it is in a tender part, and care not to have it touched. Hence it is that ſo many live, in all appearance, very regular and very religious lives, and yet not amended all their life long, in that particular which ſtands moſt in need of alteration. What if this Phariſee then did live free from extortion, injuſtice, on adultery; what praiſe, what glory was it to him, whilſt he regarded not his neighbour as himſelf, but foſtered in his breaſt an arrogant, and aſſuming pride? Ye are they, ſays our bleſſed Saviour, ſpeaking to that ſect, which juſtify yourſelves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly eſteemed amongſt men, is odious in the ſight of God; that outward ſanctity they put on, was only oſtentation; and their great zeal for the Temple, nothing elſe but rank pride and haughtineſs of ſpirit; but an intrinſick principle of goodneſs they were wholly unacquainted with; for

we find, tho' the Phariſees ſeldom or ever broke in upon the laws of temperance or ſobriety, yet had they no internal principle of goodneſs in them to recommend themſelves to the favour of God: our bleſſed Saviour could not think of, much leſs ſpeak of them, but with indignation; and tho' we always find him converſing freely and friendly with publicans and ſinners, yet the Phariſees moved his ſoul to anger, and ſhewed that the ſon of God could pardon all ſins ſooner than an ill-grounded zeal, and an extraordinary pretence to godlineſs.

He has every where ſhewn that a careleſs and inconſiderate converſation, when reflected upon with a truly ſorrowful and ſelf-reflecting mind, procures a more favourable acceſs to the throne of God, than any the moſt raviſhing contemplations of our own imagined excellencies are able to do. To humble or mortify, therefore, in a more eſpecial manner, the vanity of thoſe who are highly conceited of themſelves, and think meanly of their brethern, our bleſſed Saviour here, in the words of my text,

by way of parable, deſcribes a Phariſee and a Publican together in the Temple. The end of their repairing thither was the ſame; for they both went up to pray. But in this, their behaviour was very different, and their ſucceſs no leſs ſo: our Saviour ſhews us the difference between them in theſe words; I tell you, this man went down to his houſe juſtified rather than the other. The equity of which will appear by conſidering the character of the parties concerned: a Phariſee was a ſcrupulous and moſt preciſe Jew, who profeſſed, or ſeemed to make the greateſt conſcience of his duty: a Publican, on the other hand, was an officer, whom the Roman governors employed as a collector of their cuſtoms, but who gave himſelf up to all manner of mercileſs oppreſſion.

The Phariſee's temper is ſufficiently diſcovered by the form of his prayer: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers; or even as this Publican. This ſtile is arrogant and boaſting; for even the thanks he would ſeem to give, ſpeak ſufficiency and

ſelf-

ſelf-ſatisfaction, and do not ſo much render to God his praiſe, as they proclaim his own pride; therefore is his firſt remarkable error a truſting in himſelf, that he was righteous. But admitting ſo lofty an opinion of himſelf to be never ſo juſt; yet what neceſſity was there; what privilege could he have to diſparage and vilify the other? was there no way to bleſs God for being good himſelf, but by repreſenting every body elſe to be quite bad? I am not as other men are. What could be greater vanity than thus to ſet himſelf off, as an exception to the whole world at once? The Publican, quite contrary in all his expreſſions, in all his deportment, ſpeaks nothing but concern, and the tendereſt contrition and moſt profound humility. He ſtands afar off, as not preſuming upon a nearer approach to the preſence of ſo holy a majeſty as God: He lifts not up ſo much as his eyes to Heaven; but by the melancholy of his countenance, takes to himſelf the ignominious titles ſo liberally beſtowed upon him by his ſcornful companion. He ſmites his breaſt, as conſcious

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of the pollutions lodged there; looks not abroad, but confines his thoughts to his own miſery; alledges nothing in his own vindication; no mixture of good to balance or mitigate the evil of his paſt life; ſeeks no refuge, except in the mercy of a forgiving God, brings no motive to incline that mercy; but a ſorrowful ſenſe of his own unworthineſs, and a humble hope in God's unlimited goodneſs; and therefore upon this, this ſaving, this only ſupporting attribute, he caſts himſelf entirely upon God; be merciful to me a ſinner. And ſtill you find this man, ſays our Saviour, went down to his houſe juſtified rather than the other.

Such are the perſons repreſented to us by the foregoing parable; the one burſting full of pride, cenſoriouſneſs, and diſdain; the other as penitent, meek, and low as a true and a real ſorrow for ſin could lay him; and yet the event is, that this man, who humbled himſelf, was exalted; and that he who exalted himſelf, was abaſed. Nor is it thus in a ſingle inſtance only,

but

but our bleſſed Lord draws it into a general concluſion, and declares it ſhall always be thus.

In diſcourſing, therefore, further upon the text, I ſhall firſt conſider the diſpoſition blameable in this Phariſee; his pride and ſelf-conceit, and in conſequence of that, his deſpiſing of other men.

Secondly, that not oſtentatious or phariſaical righteouſneſs, but real goodneſs, is acceptable in the ſight of God; and thirdly, lay before you the benefit of humility.

Firſt, then, I ſhall conſider the diſpoſition blameable in this Phariſee, his pride and ſelf-conceit, and in conſequence of that, his deſpiſing of other men.

Now, as all ſins, mental as well as ſenſual, are deteſtable in the ſight of God, ſo pride is not the leaſt. Though men are apt to think that this fond conceit of any religious excellency, wherein this overvaluing of themſelves is only an amuſing folly, an innocent allowable weakneſs or infirmity;

yet

yet upon examination we ſhall find it a dangerous error, ſo groſs an indiſpoſition of mind as diſables us from doing all thoſe good offices for which God ſent us into the world: to this ignorant ſelf-love we muſt aſcribe all that inſolence, impoſition, and violence, which we ſee acted in the world: meekneſs may as reaſonably be expected from a lyon, on temperance from a wolf, as friendly treatment from a man who is conceited of his own power or greatneſs. As he is ever aiming at a character above the common ſize, ſo is he ever aſſuming in his carriage towards others: every thing that relates to his own character is ſeen thro' a falſe light; the moſt deformed blemiſhes are thrown off at a vaſt diſtance, and leſſened to the eye; and the moſt ſlender appearances of virtue are brought nearer, and magnified; in conſequence of which deluſion, he truſts to his own merits, and deſpiſes his brethren.

This ſhould teach us not to be ſevere in our cenſure, nor too peremptory in our decrees againſt other men; for we alſo are men

men of like paſſions with them, tho' not of the ſame; and therefore we ought to judge favourably of their faults, as we hope God will judge of ours.

The offences this Phariſee diſavows, are adultery, extortion, and injuſtice; and the keeping clear of theſe vices is no doubt a bleſſing, of which every good man ought to have a very thankful ſenſe: But yet the virtue requiſite for approving ourſelves to God, who ſees not as man ſees, is a great deal more; conſcience, not reputation, is the principle we are to act on. Adultery and extortion, 'tis true, are grievous crimes; but 'tis as true, that pride, avarice and uncharitable judging, are ſo too.

The railing at other mens vices is but a poor pretence to virtue; therefore if we indeed deſire to inform them, the true chriſtian way is, not to inſult over their failings, but win them over by an eaſy converſation; for tho' truth is powerful of itſelf, yet there muſt be ſomething of goodneſs to recommend it; there muſt be

charms to perſuade, as well as demonſtration to convince; and ſince the great work of religion is to make us in ſome meaſure like to God, ſurely he that is moſt charitable and meek, is alſo almoſt religious. I dwell with him, ſays God, that is of an humble ſpirit; and if this be the character of that man in whom the Lord delighteth, ſurely the proud zealots are the men whom his ſoul abhors. Such was the pattern our Saviour ſet us in his life time; how charitable was his ſoul; how kind and affable in his converſation, notwithſtanding the world was then come to the very height of wickedneſs; then the iniquity of men was full: if our eyes are ſo very pure that we cannot with pleaſure behold iniquity, let us but turn the proſpect, and look into our own hearts, and there the very beſt of us may find iniquity enough to make us humble. In a word, inſtead of appearing righteous men, and acceptable to the world, we ſhould endeavour to be really good men, and acceptable to God; which was the ſecond thing I propoſed to treat on, namely,

namely, that not righteouſneſs but goodneſs was acceptable in the ſight of God.

Now righteouſneſs, in the proper ſignification of the word, is a ſtrict adhering to the letter of the law, and an exact obſervance of the punctilio of our duty in all our tranſactions between man and man; and he that directs himſelf exactly by this rule, is commonly, and properly ſaid to be a righteous man; that is, one whoſe care indeed extends no further than himſelf; all his concern is only and barely to do what relates to his own intereſt. Now a good man does not aim at being inoffenſive only, but beneficial to mankind; he does not confine himſelf within the narrow bounds of ſtrict righteouſneſs, but univerſal good-will; charity enlarges his ſoul, and makes him launch forth upon all occaſions into generous expreſſions, and tender inſtances of benevolence towards his fellow creatures; and 'tis this tenderneſs of diſpoſition, this voluntary affectionate concern for the good of other men, that makes a man properly be called good, and as ſuch, to be beloved.

Good nature is all that a man is good for in the world; without which, his riches only make him proud; and all his other admired qualities will but make him vain and inſolent. What could be a more diſagreeable or ungrateful ſight, than to ſee a Phariſee thus ſtrutting in his righteouſneſs, and full of himſelf, thanking God, that he was not like other men, when no wiſe man would be like him if he could. Stand off from me, for I am holier than thou; and yet would not have us ſtand too far off neither, for fear his holineſs ſhould not be ſeen. And yet notwithſtanding the abſurdity ſuch a behaviour will certainly bring a man to, and always puff him up, if he has not a great proportion of humility and goodneſs to keep him down. Many therefore, and great are the obligations which lie upon us to practice this excellent virtue, from the neceſſity of our being not only righteous, but good. There is nothing but meekneſs and peace, joy and charity, to be ſeen in the regions above; and if we even hope to go thither, it is by the exerciſe of theſe virtues that we muſt

make

make our way. Theſe are the endowments that muſt qualify us for a place in Heaven, and by the improvements which we have made in theſe qualities, our Saviour will judge us at the laſt day. Then the queſtion will be, not ſo much how circumſpect we have walked in the eyes of mankind, and made the world admire us for righteous men; but what acts of mercy and kindneſs we have performed: that is, not how righteous, but how good we are. This will be the great queſtion at the laſt day, and 'tis to be feared, many reputed righteous men will then be at a great loſs how to anſwer it. Other virtues may be found, but little to the purpoſe, when God comes to inquire, not what neceſſary duties we have omitted, but what kind and charitable offices we have done. There lies the merit of our cauſe; and when we ſpeak to that, we do indeed ſpeak to the purpoſe, and ſhall be ſure to be favourably heard.

The Phariſaical way of arguing then, by compariſon, is we ſee, deceitful; men are betrayed

betrayed by it into taking falſe meaſures of themſelves, and ſpeaking that peace to their conſciences, as no way belong to them; for what advantage can another's faults bring to us? 'tis certain each man's actions are the proper iſſue he ſhall be judged upon; thoſe of our brethren cannot be conſidered in the account; and for a man to be eſteemed righteous here, or to depend upon being happy hereafter, becauſe ſome others are more wicked now, or ſhall be more miſerable then, is not leſs abſurd than it were for one bankrupt to boaſt of his wealth, becauſe another is gone off for a larger ſum.

If then the pretended innocence of this Phariſee before us was ſo ſhort and imperfect, and if his boaſted righteouſneſs was liable to ſo juſt exceptions, our wonder may very well ceaſe, that his prayer found no better acceptance; for he that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted. To conclude; no man ſhould boaſt in his riches and wealth, or judge other men, but ſubmit himſelf to the great

great judge of heaven and earth, and ſtrive who ſhall ſerve God beſt for the good of our own ſouls.

To God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed all Honour, Power and Dominion now and forever. Amen.

FINIS.

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